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ABSTRACT

School administrators sometimes face circumstances in which student searches seem necessary in order to maintain discipline and provide a safe learning environment. This publication provides an overview of recent court cases related to student searches, in an effort to help school officials anticipate and avoid legal problems while they carry out their duties to ensure the safety of their students. Topics include justification for a search, the importance of individualized suspicion, the totality of circumstances, pat-downs and strip searches, and blanket searches. Although students expect privacy in the school setting, the state's custodial and supervisory authority means that students have a lesser expectation of privacy than would an ordinary citizen. Eight specific guidelines are offered. (Contains 31 endnotes). (LMI)

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